women in labor. A second woman, the midwife, is summoned at the same time. There were four midwives in Rwanda in 1951, all women of the lower classes. The mother is delivered lying on mattresses spread on the floor. When the baby is held up by the midwife, the women cry Ihirwa (Ignite, "Overjoy") and Ilish ("God"), which conveys the event to the waiting men nearby. The midwife severs the umbilical cord with a knife and ties it, and the baby is washed in water, rolled in a mixture of oil and salt, and swaddled. Pieces of cloth have been placed under the mother. The blood is washed from these and they may be used again. The afterbirth, Isumo nkuru ("friend of the father"), is taken some distance from the house and buried. A woman is considered impure for forty days after the birth and she is not allowed to have intercourse with her husband during this period. When it is completed, she is supposed to take a ritualized bath in which forty cups of water are poured over her. Intercourse between husband and wife is freely permitted during pregnancy.

The female relatives of the mother remain with her for seven days. A celebration for both sexes ensues, depending for its size on whether or not the newly-born is a boy and the wealth of the father. For the wealthy, a series of animals, sheep or goats, are slaughtered and their flesh is distributed to the poor. A banquet is held for the friends and relatives of the house, lasting from a few days to two weeks, at times accompanied by dancing and the music of the flute and drum. A poor man can only

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CHAPTER IV

LIFE CYCLE

BIRTH

Bringing children into the world is the justification and idea of the Oshoosi marriage; when this is denied,

The following prohibition concerning birth were given me by the chief's wife at Tapoosa.

Parturition takes place in a sitting position. One of the ordinary support-cooking pots, a milk pail, is placed on the floor between-legs. Over this is laid a thin, padded mattress on which the woman in labour soon herself. An assistant places herself behind, holds her under the arms, and supports her back. Another squats down in front so that the patient object to give birth can grasp her round the neck. This woman is most acts as the midwife. She may be an ordinary, experienced woman from the village. However, in Sefwi there was a midwife who had undergone a three months course in Bogoloki, and the woman who had assisted the one whom I my investigator's home at the 3rd Birth that had taken place there, was stated to be a fully-trained midwife. Even the first to be trained in Enkonsuo?. At the time I was there this woman was about 40 years of age.

Birth take place in one of the rooms of the house, I was told that the father was be present. The umbilical cord is cut by knife or scissors. The last shower at the Sefwi Dwo Dio told me that in case of a sudden birth and in the countryside, the umbilical cord could be severed by a sharp stone, another stone being used as base.

In the villages I visited there was no doctor. Even a complicated birth was left to the local authorities in the form of an experienced neighbour or a midwife with a three month certificate. A female European gynaecologist at the hospital at Sehkonsuo told of a case where the birth came to a stop in one of the villages. The fetus was dead, and the woman had lain for 24 hours with all her original functions as a threefold, while the village women debated whether or not the dangerously ill woman should be transported by road over the mountains to Sehkonsuo or wait overlong operation. Finally it was decided to send her to the town where her life was saved thanks to the efforts of the gynaecologist.

In another case a woman in Sefwi continued with fever after giving birth. She was taken on hammock and then by bus to the hospital at Sehkonsuo. The child, which was a few days old, would not be taken and died during the woman's absence.

The new-born child, usually is wrapped in a piece of native material that acts as a nappy and is changed from time to day. It is then laid on a long piece of material folded into a triangle that reaches to its shoulders and is somewhat longer than the legs. The cloth is about 1.20 m. x 1.20 m. The child's legs are straightened out and the lower points of the cloth are tied up around the feet. The two upper